

Pittington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114125
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378799
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Bryan
Headteacher	Cathy Lee
Date of previous school inspection	01 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons and eight teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Views of stakeholders were also considered through questionnaire responses from 112 parents and carers, 22 staff and 90 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage assures good quality provision and impacts upon good quality outcomes for children.
- How well teaching and learning at all stages promotes good, or better progress for all pupils by ensuring that the needs of all groups are effectively met, especially at Key Stage 1.
- How well the developing curriculum engages and motivates pupils providing them with opportunities to be independent learners making the best use of their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Information about the school

This school is of average size for a primary school with the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals low. The majority of pupils are from a White British background and almost all speak English as their first language. Although few pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities or have a statement of special educational need, the proportion of such pupils or those whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable is increasing. Over half of pupils now come from outside of the catchment area. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staff changes. The school holds the following awards: Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School status, Football Charter and Intermediate International Schools.

A private provider 'Kids Choice' provides additional childcare provision before and after school and during school holidays. This provision was inspected in February 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pittington is a good school. It has great strengths in the outstanding care, guidance and support it provides for pupils and the ways in which it forges excellent partnerships with other organisations and agencies to support their learning. Pupils love their school and this is demonstrated in their high attendance. They feel extremely safe and exhibit excellent standards in behaviour. Parents and carers are greatly supportive of the school and a high proportion of them completed the questionnaire to praise the school. They tell of good progress and the opportunities they have to engage in their children's learning. One comment reflective of many received notes, 'Staff celebrate individual qualities and personalities allowing confidence to grow and well-rounded individuals to develop.'

Overall, pupils make good progress from their broadly expected starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach above average standards when they leave Year 6. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive and are motivated to achieve well. The impact of actions to improve the quality of writing in the school is evident in pupils' higher attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2. Good class management and interesting activities, well-matched to individual needs, enable pupils to progress well. Satisfactory progress over Key Stage 1 represents the lower levels of challenge to pupils, especially for those who are more-able. Expectations are sometimes insufficiently high and lessons in Key Stage 1 do not always fully extend the independent learning skills learnt in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Under the experienced leadership of the headteacher, the governing body and other school leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate and there is a clear vision to improve the school further. Measures to improve attendance and the quality of behaviour have been particularly effective. The developing curriculum is motivating pupils' learning and enabling them to make better use of their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across other subjects. There is exceptional support for the increasing proportion of pupils who are potentially vulnerable or who have specific needs. Clear priorities have been identified for improvement and a suitable plan is in place to achieve them. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement and provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rates at which pupils, especially those who are more able, progress at Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that expectations are always sufficiently high for individual pupils, through planned activities well-matched to individual needs
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to engage in open-ended and investigative activities in literacy and numeracy, building upon their independent skills learnt in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start the school with skills and knowledge broadly similar to those of the same age. Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well overall. In lessons they are keen to succeed and to please their teachers. They are eager to engage, answer questions readily and show good concentration and reflection. For example, in an English lesson, pupils gave emotive responses after reflecting on a photograph of a couple emigrating to Australia, as they looked back at England.

Pupils' progress over Key Stage 1 is slower than that in Key Stage 2 because there is lower expectation and challenge, in particular for those who are more able. Attainment in writing is improving as a result of focused development and greater opportunities for pupils to write across other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are potentially vulnerable make good progress because of the effective strategies to support their individual learning needs and the excellent personal care, guidance and support they receive.

Pupils' attendance is high and their behaviour is excellent. They show respect to adults, happily engaging in conversations about their excellent relationships with each other and with staff. They respond very effectively to the discipline system and speak confidently about 'the look, the warning and the growler'. They feel very safe as they report there is no bullying and if they are worried there is always a member of staff to listen and help. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and enjoy taking responsibility and helping others. They are reflective and have a developing understanding of others from different backgrounds and cultures. A number of pupils take advantage of additional activities to keep fit and healthy. This is supported by a good understanding of how to eat well and of the potential danger of substance abuse. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall across the school with some that is outstanding. Teachers know pupils extremely well and plan lessons carefully to motivate interest and engagement. Teachers extend pupils' skills and understanding well. They check pupils' learning to ensure lesson objectives are met. In some lessons in Key Stage 1, the pace of learning slows because of insufficient challenge in the tasks set and lower expectations for individual pupils. In this key stage, lessons can be too directed and limit opportunities for pupils to use their independent learning skills to investigate practical and open-ended activities. Overall, teachers use the assessments of pupils' attainment to support their further learning well and have a good understanding of the level at which they are working. The use of assessment data to inform planning is continually being refined to bring about improvements in pupils' attainment, such as in writing.

Recent developments to the curriculum are providing greater opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across subjects. Pupils speak of lessons being more lively and engaging as they investigate problems and situations through different roles, such as doctors. A range of visits and visitors extend learning experiences and older pupils speak enthusiastically of outdoor education opportunities which increase their confidence and self-esteem as they participate in new and challenging experiences.

Pupils speak highly of the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive; and parents and carers agree. Outstanding links with external partners assure that the needs of all pupils, but in particular those whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are particularly well supported so they make equally good progress. The early identification of individual need is central to enable these pupils to make progress in

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

line with their peers. Links with parents and carers are highly effective with good opportunities to learn about how their children are progressing and how they can support that learning. Equally good links enable pupils to transfer seamlessly to secondary school with maximum confidence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body, leaders and managers have a very clear understanding of the school and all share a clear ambitious vision for further improvement. The development of the 'well-rounded child' is central to the school's ethos and every effort is made to ensure that pupils are happy and learn well. The headteacher leads highly effectively and delegates areas of responsibility appropriately. Staff feel valued and they have good opportunities for professional development. Good monitoring of teaching and learning contributes to effective learning overall. All leaders and managers make full contribution to the evaluation of school effectiveness and feel they have a part to play. Consequently, morale is very high. The governing body is proactive and fully involved in determining the strategic direction of the school. It assures good practice in safeguarding within the school. Staff are well trained and procedures are firmly in place and fully meet requirements. Governance is good. Individual members of the governing body work effectively to improve their particular areas of responsibility and make good use of the views of parents, carers and pupils, for example, improving the parking arrangements outside the school to ensure greater safety for all.

The school has excellent partnerships with a wide range of organisations to support the curriculum, pupils' learning and their high quality care and guidance. Staff track the progress of all pupils carefully, endeavouring to ensure that all pupils make similar progress and are able to engage in school life to the full. This has resulted in focused attention to particular areas of development, for instance in writing, where improvements are clear. Overall, there is effective promotion of equal opportunities. The school promotes community cohesion well within the school and has good links with the local community. It is developing effective links with other organisations nationally and globally.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding a mbition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the warm and welcoming environment, children settle quickly and enjoy learning. Staff know the children very well. On entry to the nursery, many children's skills are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in most areas of learning and most meet the expected levels for their age when they enter Year 1 with some exceeding these. Personal and social development is a clear strength and is clearly evident as children learn to say please and thank you, and care about each other. They are motivated and interested in the exciting range of activities provided for them, sharing and taking turns as they take responsibility in choosing what to do. This means that children make good progress in developing skills to enable them to take responsibility for tasks and develop skills for their future learning.

Simple rules support children's understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Children listen carefully and respond well during adult-led activities and confidently choose activities for themselves. The outside provision is of particularly good quality and provides a wealth of activities to challenge children's understanding. For example, children changed the angle on guttering and considered the impact upon the flow of water, extending their vocabulary and knowledge of the world about them.

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has a good understanding of the strengths of the setting. She works closely with her team and together they identify areas for improvement. For example, the quality of the outdoor setting is much improved; a successful phonics scheme has been introduced and the recent introduction of learning journals records children's successes. Links with parents and carers are excellent and staff value their input into children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a high return of questionnaires from parents and carers. The vast majority of responses were highly positive about the school. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the excellent care, guidance and support given to their children and are

extremely confident that their children are happy and safe. They feel that teachers meet their children's needs well. Some comments from parents and carers questioned the quality of, for example, safety, communication with the school and understanding the progress their children make. There was no obvious pattern to the views raised. All were fully investigated during the course of the inspection. The inspectors found that pupils feel extremely safe and that the school provides a variety of excellent opportunities for parents and carers to communicate with the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pittington Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	66	36	32	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	75	67	33	29	2	2	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	45	53	47	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	51	46	41	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	63	36	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	54	44	39	5	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	54	47	42	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	55	49	43	38	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	54	42	38	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	43	50	45	4	4	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	39	55	49	4	4	5	4
The school is led and managed effectively	66	59	35	31	3	3	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	65	35	31	2	2	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pittington Primary School, Durham, DH6 1AF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently.

You go to a good school. It has some outstanding features, including your excellent behaviour. We were very impressed by how well you respect and care for each other. We found you polite and helpful and enjoyed talking to you. We found that you really enjoy coming to school and your attendance is excellent. You feel there is no bullying and so you feel extremely safe.

Our thanks to those of you who filled in the questionnaires. They gave us lots of information and we now know how much you, and your parents and carers, appreciate your school and the staff who work there. We found that adults in your school care exceptionally well for you and make sure that you always have someone to turn to when you have a problem. Their excellent links with others from outside the school make sure that all of your individual needs are met and you can learn without worrying. Your parents and carers know and appreciate this.

Teachers mostly make lessons enjoyable for you and you respond by working really hard. We would like them to help pupils in Key Stage 1 more by providing greater challenge, especially for those who are more able. We want all the staff to expect good progress by planning activities well-matched to the needs of individual pupils. We also believe that these teachers could provide better opportunities for pupils to build on their independent learning skills by using their new knowledge in literacy and numeracy to investigate more open-ended activities.

We hope that you continue to try hard and keep up your very impressive attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Pringle
Lead Inspector

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